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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

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SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: KHARTOUM EAC CONVENES ON MARCH 12

¶1. (SBU) CDA Fernandez convened the Emergency Action Committee (EAC) on Thursday, March 12, to review the current security situation in Sudan after Authorized Departure was announced on March ¶10. The DCM, POL, MGT, DLO, RAO, USAID, IMO, RMO, PAO, OBO SSM, CONS, and RSO were in attendance.

¶2. (SBU) After a week of inciting and threatening rhetoric directed in Government of Sudan controlled media against the U.S. in general and the 13 expelled International Non-Government Organizations in particular, the CDA reported the regime has reduced the intensity of its public statements. As the EAC continues to evaluate the post-ICC security environment, it is concerned about the March 11 kidnapping of five Medecins Sans Frontieres-Belgium (MSF-B) humanitarian workers in a remote town on the North and West Darfur border. One of the two Sudanese kidnapped in the group was released on March 12. Those remaining include a Canadian, French, Italian, and Sudanese. A Canadian EmbOff reported to the RSO that the kidnappers were motivated by the heated rhetoric in Sudanese President Bashir's recent speeches. In exchange for the hostages' release, the kidnappers are demanding that the ICC rescind the arrest warrant and that MSF-B pay a two million Sudanese pound (900,000 USD) ransom.

¶3. (SBU) The EAC also discussed an alleged threat against Sudanese opposition leader Hassan al-Turabi who was released from prison earlier this week. Turabi's family members have expressed concern about Turabi's safety following his release from prison to Sudanese security and police officials. The family has also appealed for assistance to the UK and other Western embassies. In a widely-distributed e-mail, Turabi's family members state their concern that Islamic extremists within the regime will assassinate Turabi for his public statements recommending that a Muslim leader be handed over to an "infidel's court" (i.e. the International Criminal Court.) The EAC concluded that it has no way to confirm whether such concerns are valid and whether such a plot by the regime or others exists against Turabi.

¶4. (SBU) While senior-ranking GOS officials are reluctant to meet with EmbOffs or take Washington calls, security and law enforcement channels remain open and productive. Shortly after the EAC meeting, National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) liaison informed EmbOff that they had arrested the Sudanese national who called-in a telephone bomb threat to the Embassy on March 10. NISS officers said they would provide information from their preliminary investigation to the Embassy on Sunday, March 15.

¶5. (SBU) The Mission remains on a heightened level of alert while reminding all personnel to maintain a low profile. Four employees and two family members will be leaving on authorized departure between March 14 and 16.

FERNANDEZ